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P 100500Z OCT 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8409  
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY  
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 3639  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7301  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9431  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1923  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5485  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 6340  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - DPRK NUCLEAR PROGRAM

LEAD STORIES: On Wednesday morning several Japanese dailies front-paged Diet remarks by Prime Minister Fukuda on Tuesday, in which he expressed a cautious view about Japan's exercise of its right to collective defense.

¶1. "Prime Minister Should Swiftly Firm up Strategy" The liberal Asahi editorialized (10/10): "The GOJ decided yesterday on a half-year extension of sanctions on North Korea. Such measures as a ban on the entry of the DPRK passenger-freighter Man Gyong Bong will continue for the time being.... It is true that no progress has been made on the abduction issue. However, North Korea has halted the operation of and sealed nuclear reactors and other related facilities in line with agreements at the six-party talks. Furthermore, it has agreed to disable three major plants by year's end. While these steps do not go so far as to ensure that operation of those facilities cannot be resumed, this is still a positive development that Japan could have acknowledged by partially lifting sanctions.... A flexible approach tied to progress would enable Japan to send a message to the DPRK.... Extending the sanctions under these circumstances was too simplistic."

¶2. "No Change in North Korean Nuclear Threat" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri commented (10/10): "Tuesday marked the first anniversary of North Korea's nuclear test, which was carried out in the face of warnings from the international community. After a long stalemate, the six-party talks have finally entered a stage where agreed-upon procedures toward denuclearization will be implemented. However, North Korea has yet to give up any plutonium or nuclear weapons. The size of Pyongyang's stockpiles and their locations are unknown. The reality is that the North

Korean nuclear threat has not diminished one iota....  
Following North Korea's nuclear test, the US altered  
its approach toward the DPRK and began direct talks....  
In addition to extending heavy fuel oil, the US has  
told the North Koreans that it will lift economic  
sanctions and delist it as a state sponsor of terrorism  
in order to prompt Pyongyang to implement the 'next  
steps.'... Japan has been pressing the DPRK to come  
clean on the abduction issue. Without specific action  
from Pyongyang to do so, the US should not delist it."

DONOVAN